

# LEADING UPWARDS

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# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are meeting....the Yugambeh/Kombumerri peoples.....and pay my respect to the Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# My Approach

- I will be deliberately naive
- I will offer condensed and slippery ideas
- I will focus focus on dynamics more than tactical tips
- I make no claims to authority or a master narrative...personal opinions and lessons learnt above all else



Hopefully...something will tickle your fancy!



# A Story in Three Movements

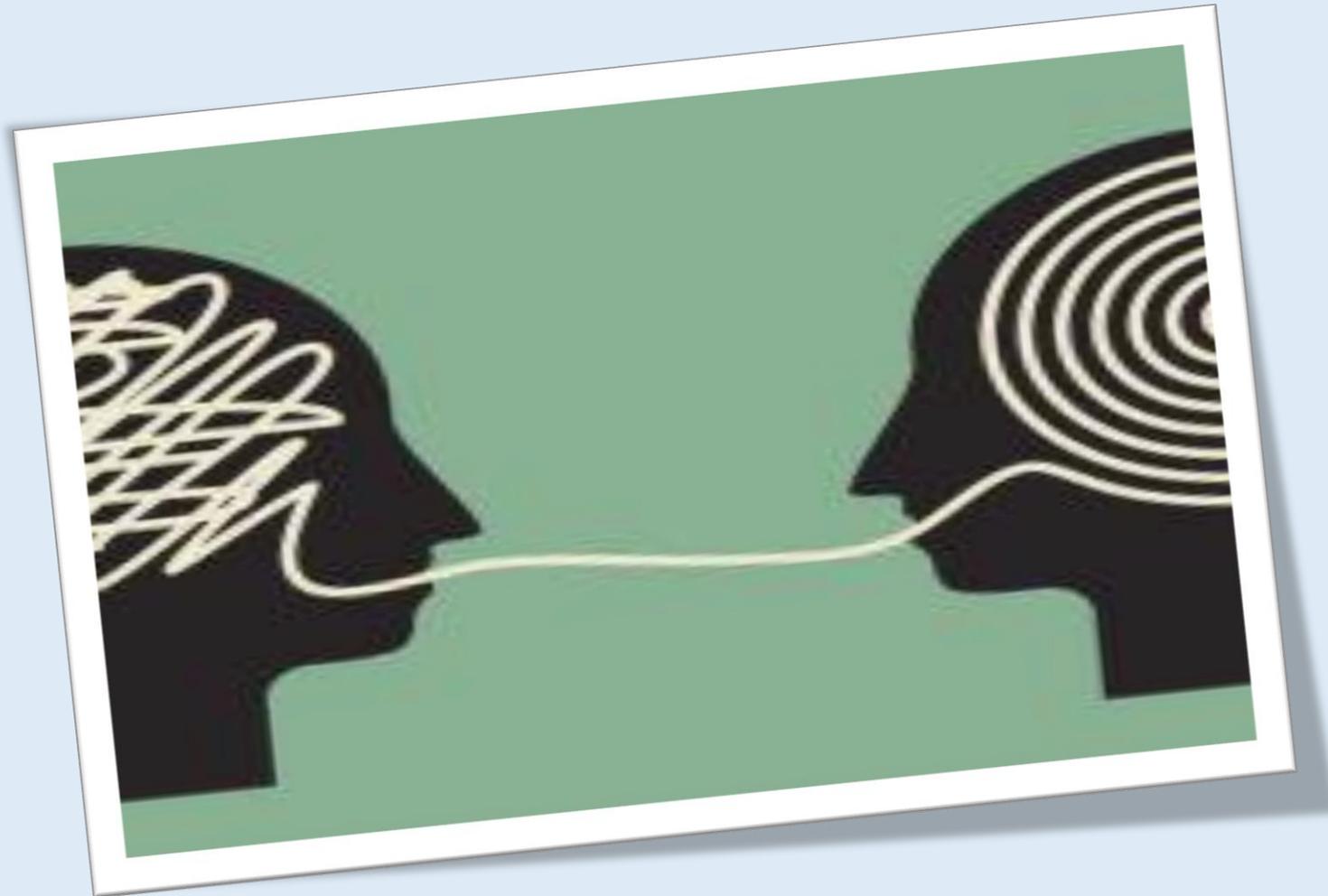
- Firstly, I want to talk about ‘partnership’ as the foundation for much of our concerns about ‘being influential, having strategic conversations and leading and working in times of change.
- Secondly, I want to talk about the challenges and opportunities of ‘being in the middle’ of a university.
- Thirdly, I want to give you an opportunity to discuss, digest and apply to your context

# Movement One

## The Language of Partnership

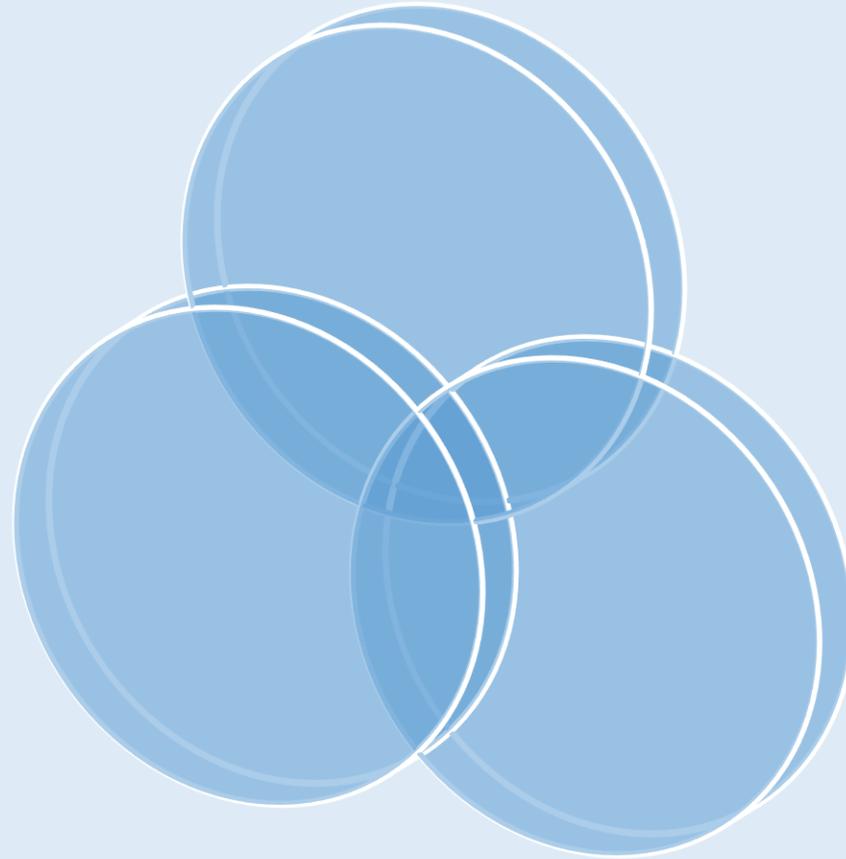


# Leaders and Leadership Schemas *about L and T* *A source of miscommunication?*



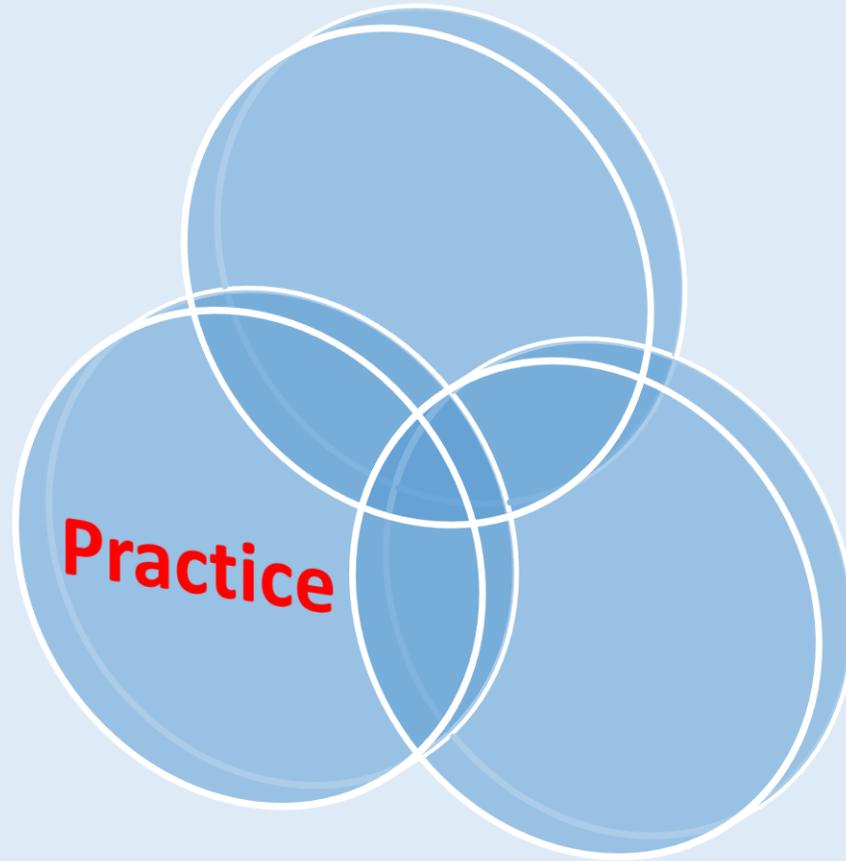
# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

*How do we talk about learning and teaching?*

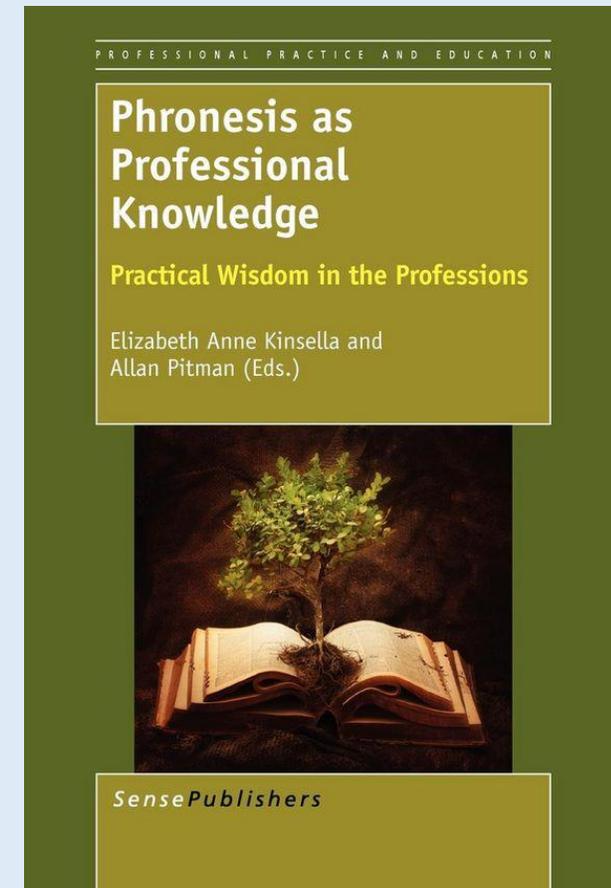
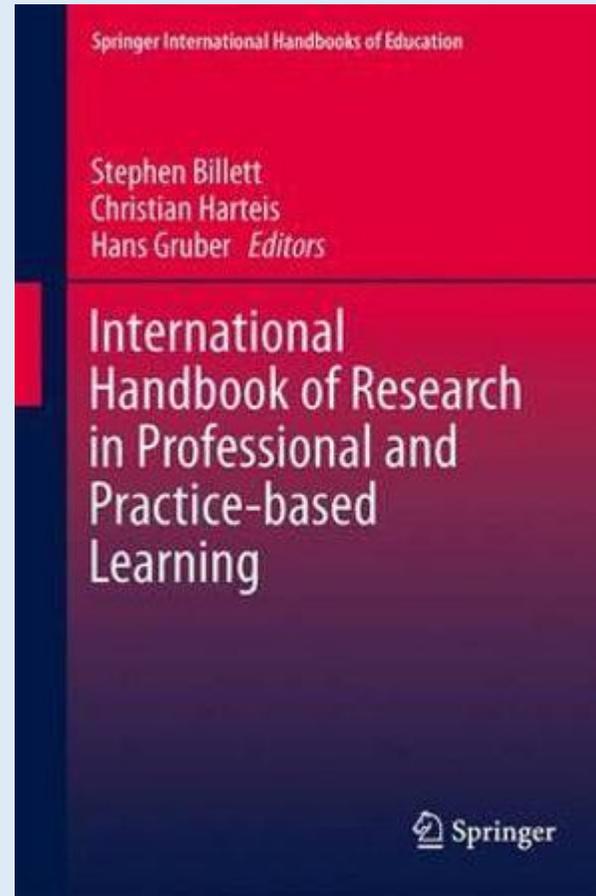
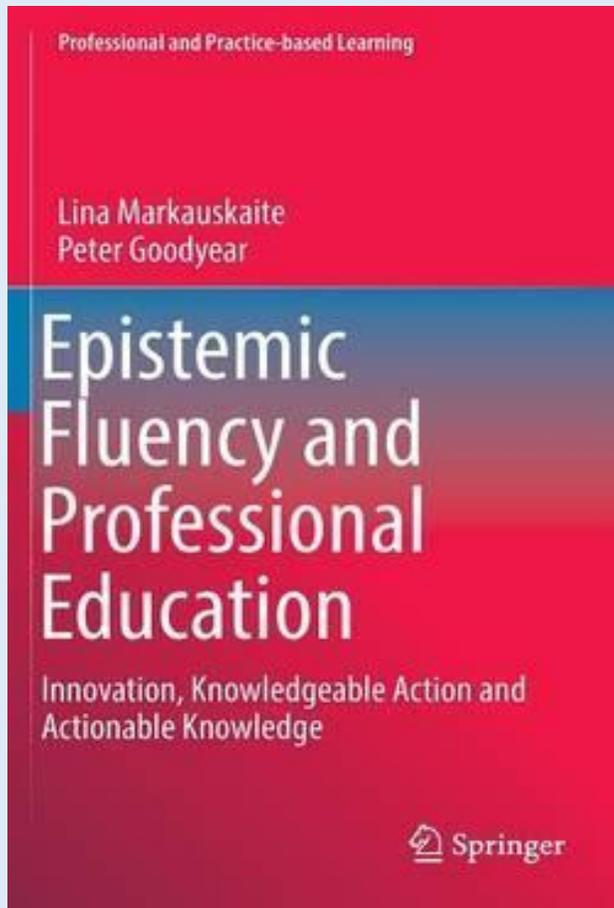


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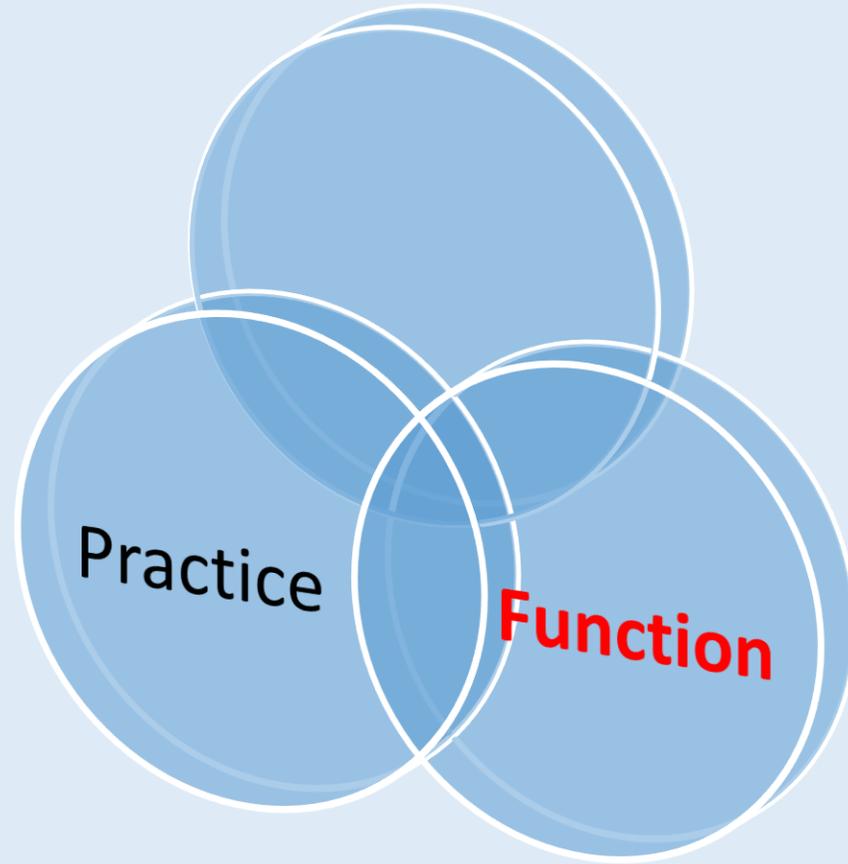


# The Language of Practice

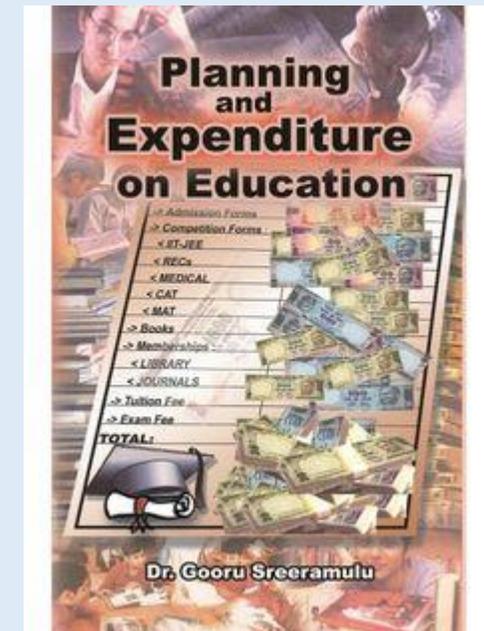
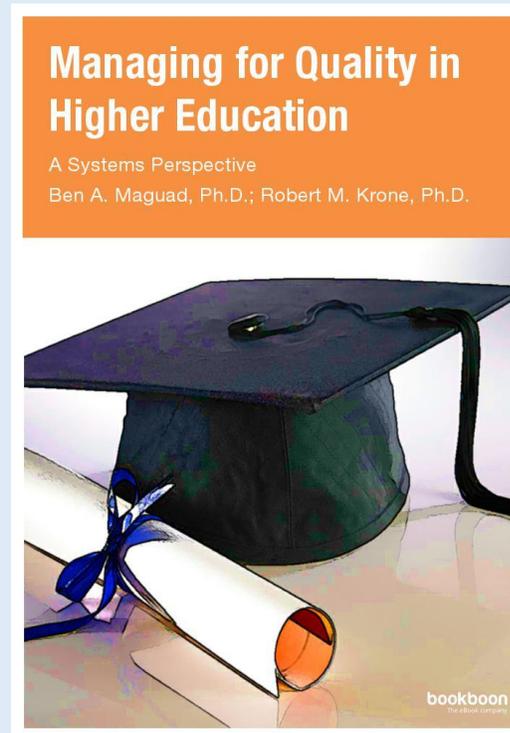
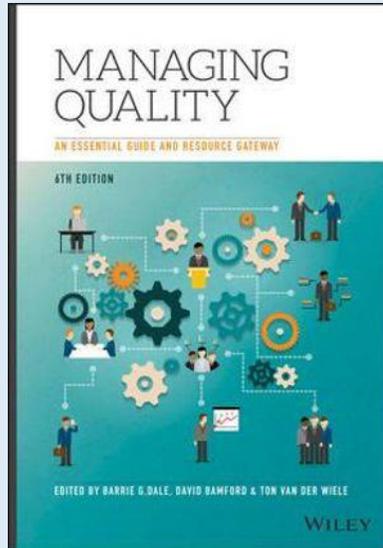


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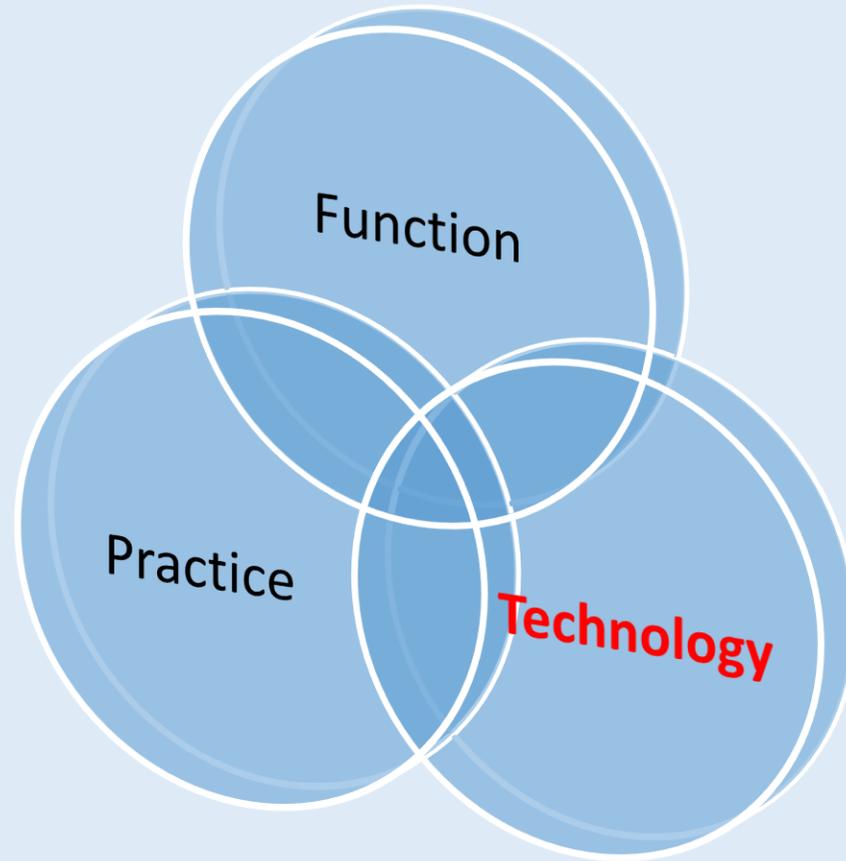


# The Language of Function



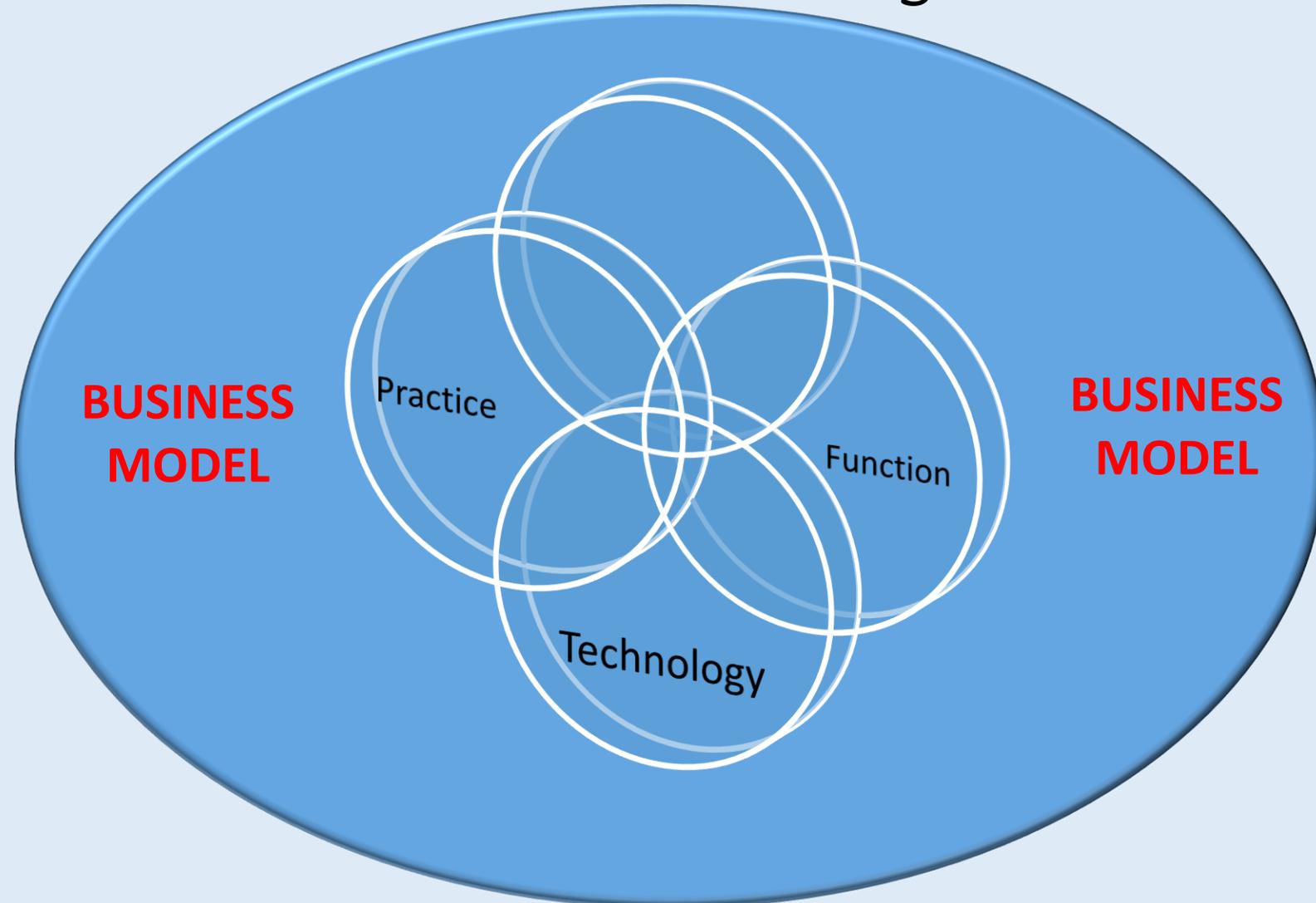
# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

*How do we talk about learning and teaching?*



# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

*How do we talk about learning and teaching?*



# Business Model

## Clarifying Questions

**Value Proposition** How do we create value: product, cost or service?

**Identity** What type of university are we?

**Focus** What is our marketplace? How do we grow share and/or maintain share?

**Strategy** How do we need to innovate in order to build capability, scalability, and/or sustainability)?

## Useful Sources

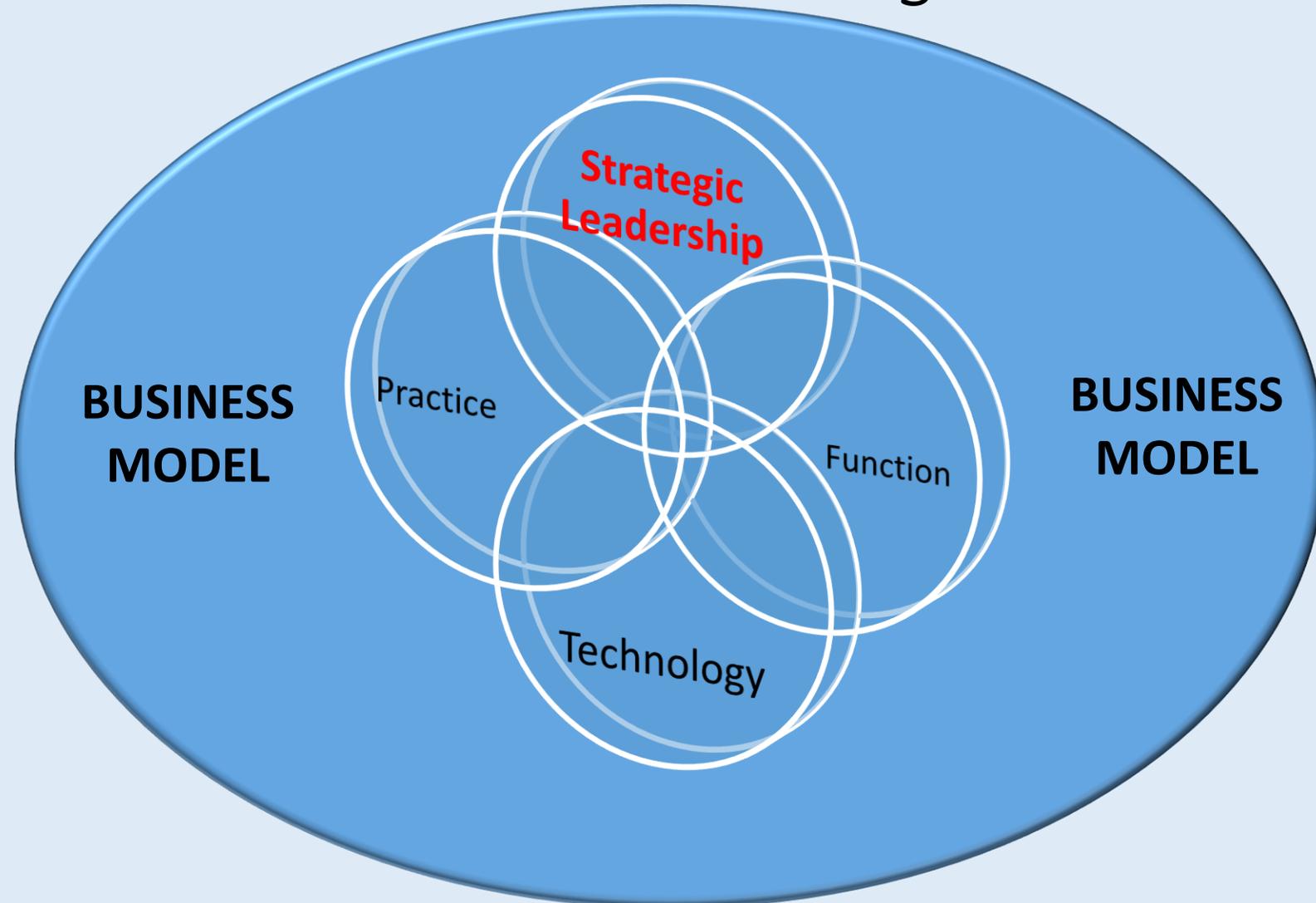
Alex Osterwalder *Business Model Canvas* (Thinking Map)

Clay Christensen *Reinventing your Business Model* (Change Process)

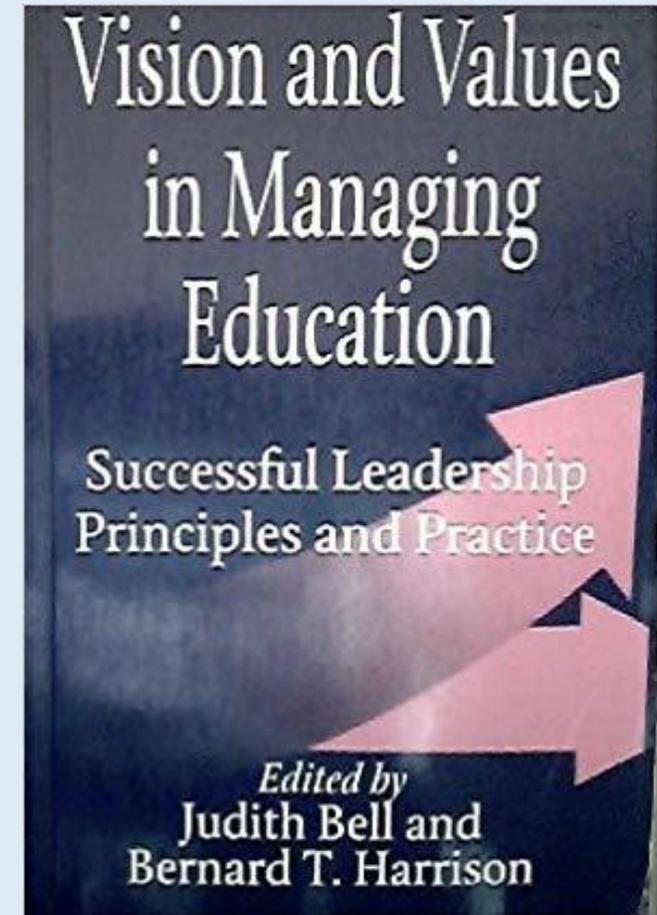
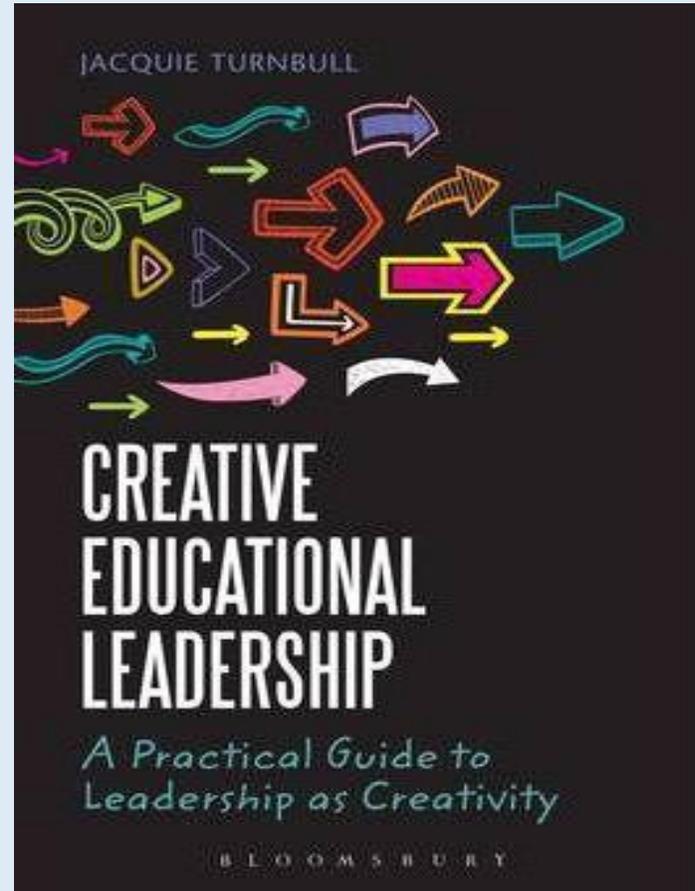
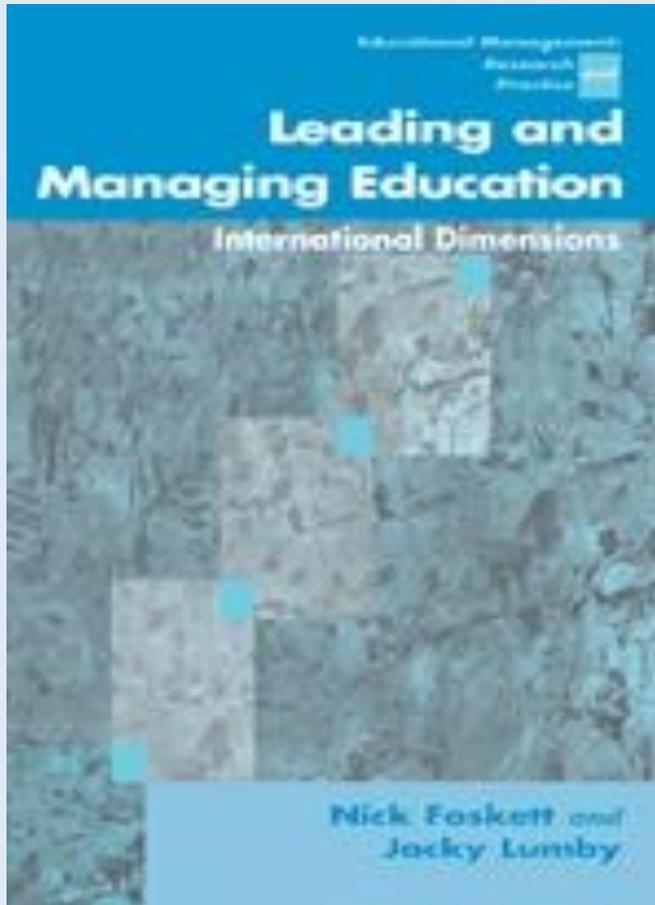
Mark Johnson *Seizing the White Space* (Typology of Models)

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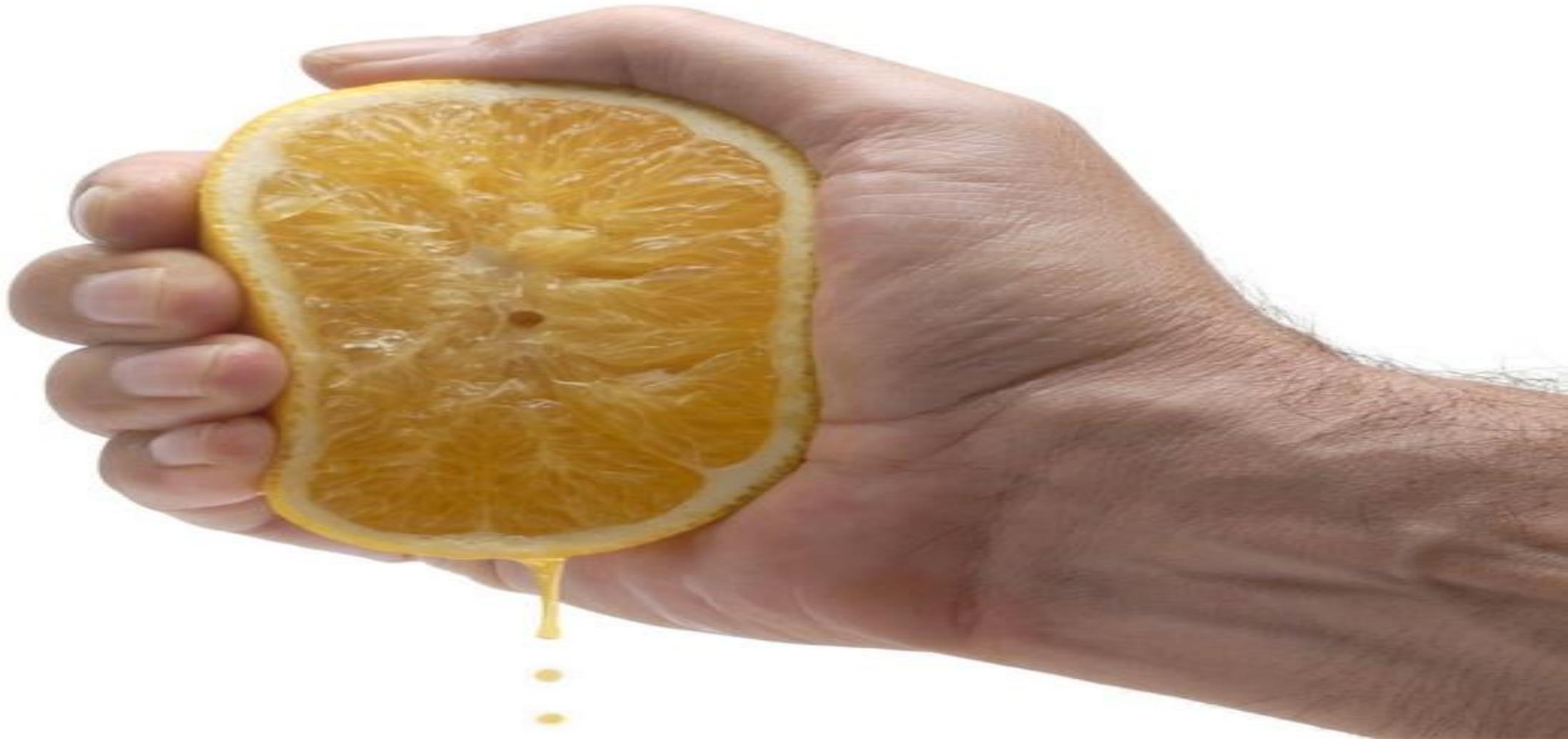
*How do we talk about learning and teaching?*



# The language of strategic leadership



**Strategic Leadership:**  
Working out if the juice is worth the squeeze!



# Leaders and Leadership Schemas

*Developing a shared language about innovation*

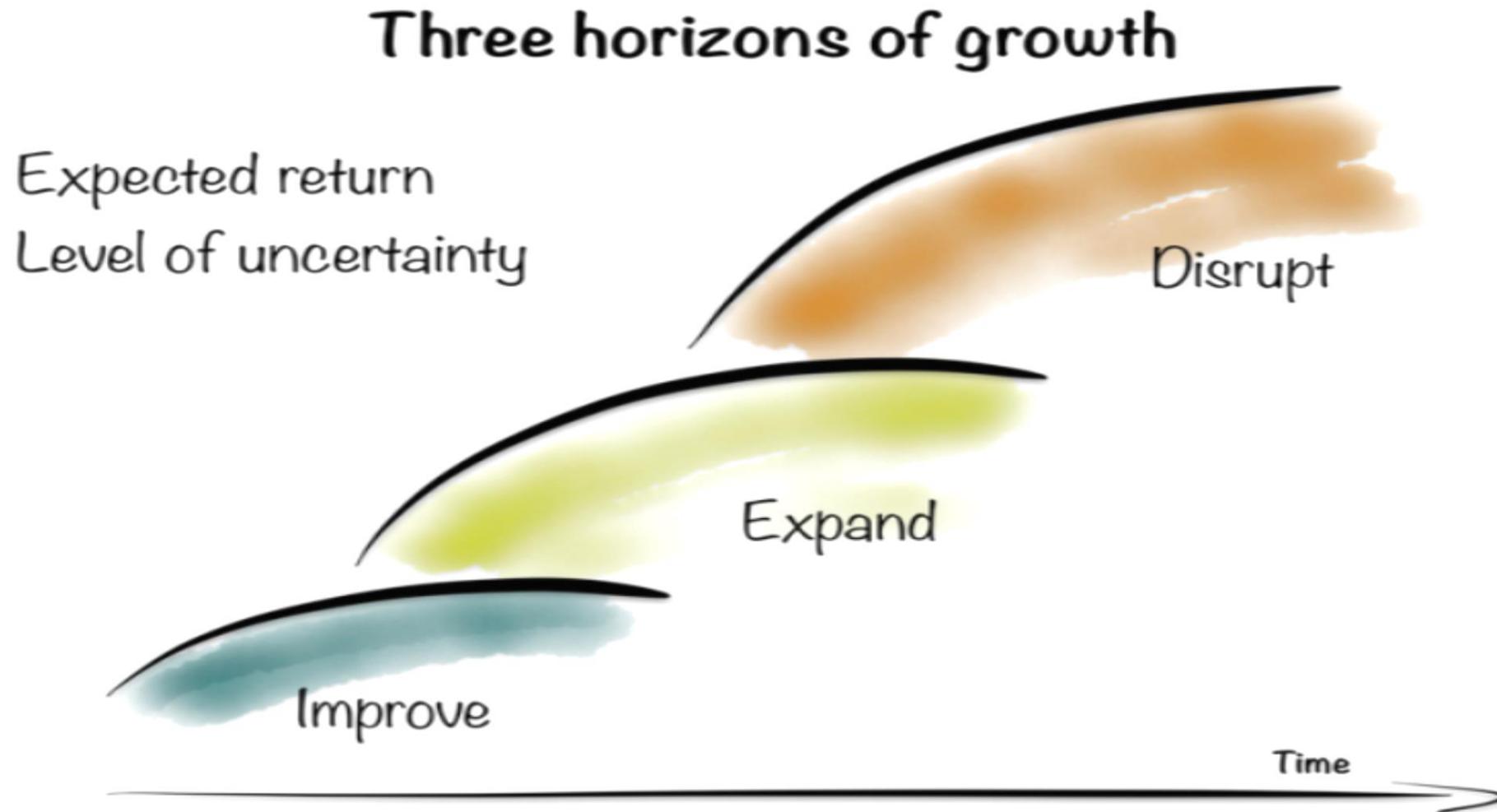
The key to making headway  
on a project is to find a  
**shared language.**

# What is our innovation portfolio?

Grappling with the wicked challenge of coherently articulating and agreeing:

- How should we manage our *innovation zone of uncertainty*?
- What is our mindset in working through the *tension* of supporting current functions and identifying, testing and capitalizing on emerging trends and possibilities?
- What should our *portfolio profile* be across the horizons and timeframe of innovation:

# What is our innovation portfolio?



# Leaders and Leadership Schemas **about innovation**

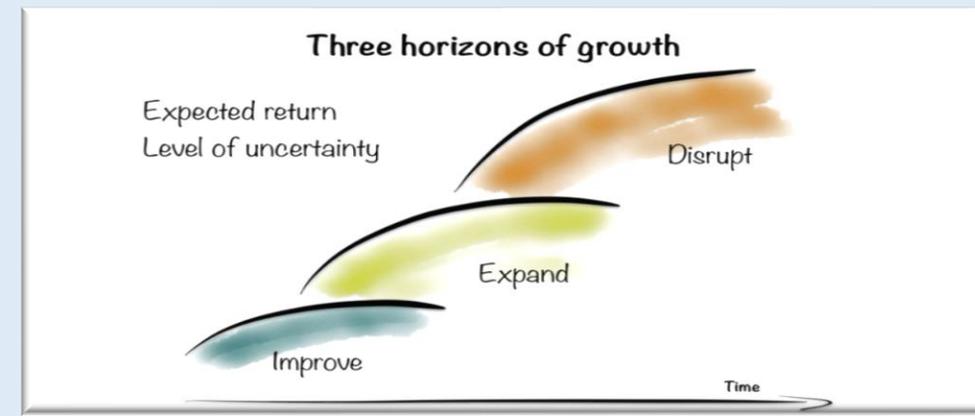
**Horizon 1** Improving the **current core model** (e.g., enhancing current capabilities, roles and operations within the current system/business model)

**Horizon 2** Experimenting with ways to **develop out** from the current model (e.g., working with emerging opportunities, known disruptions, applying developing known innovative concepts and models)

**Horizon 3** Exploring **completely different ways** of doing things (e.g., working at the edge of imagined possibilities, exploring radical innovations/game changers, challenging assumptions, working with transformative R and D partnerships)

## Useful Sources

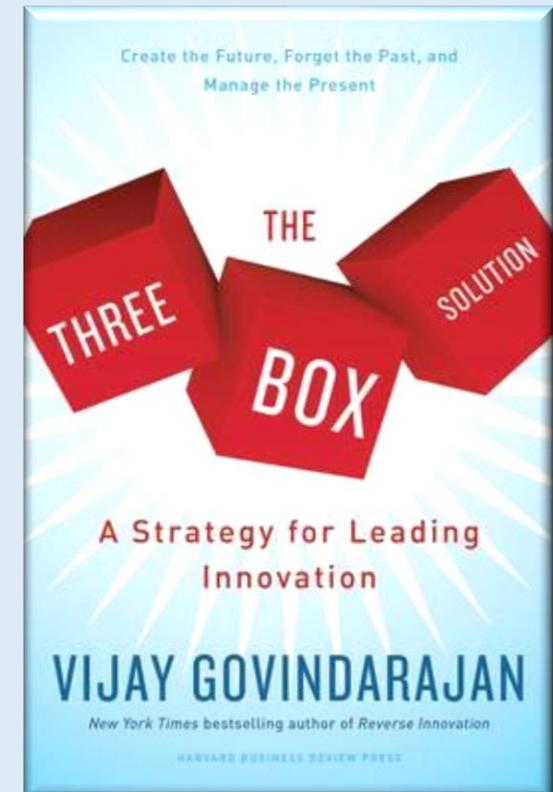
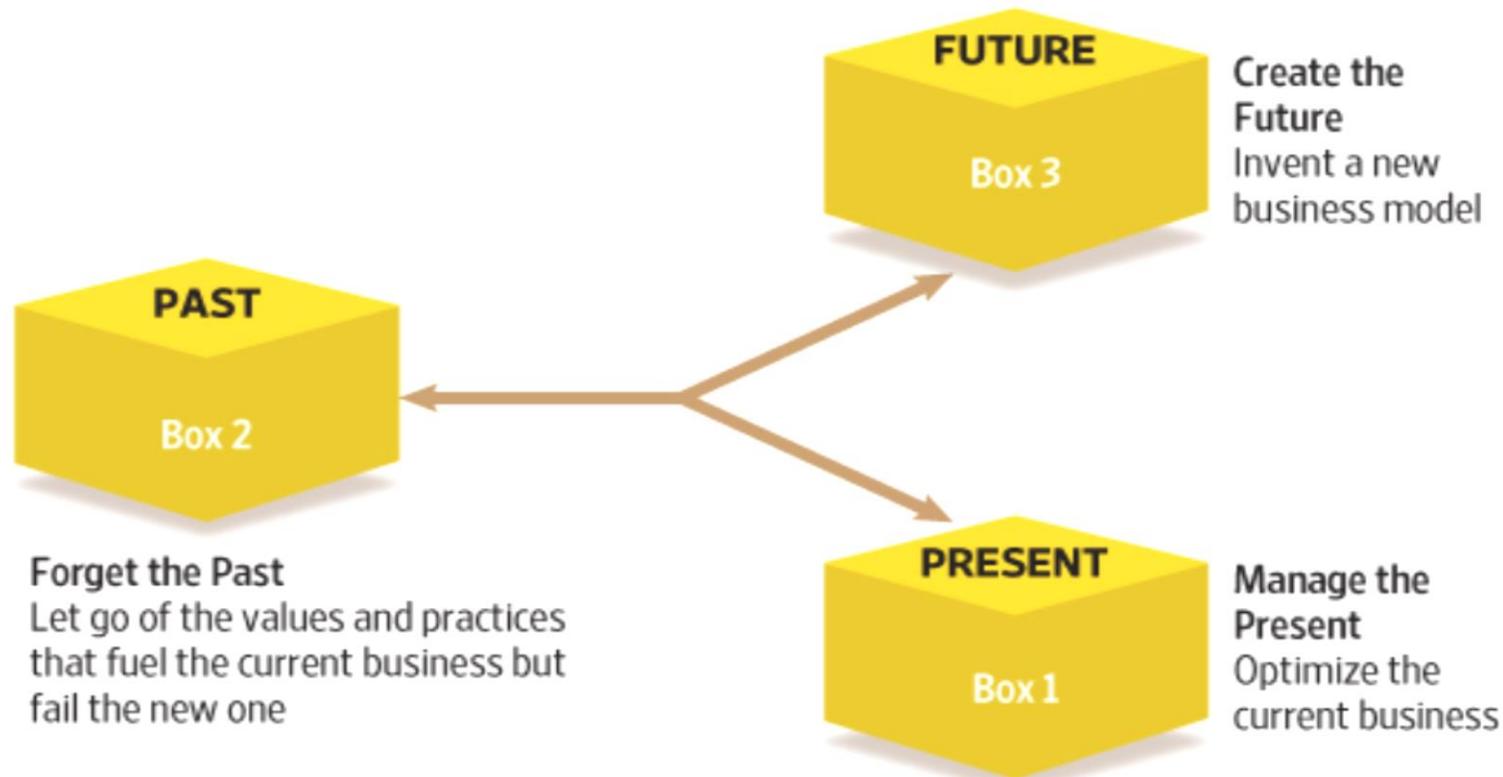
*Three Horizon Methodology (Baghai, et al., 1999)*



# Leading Conversations about Innovation

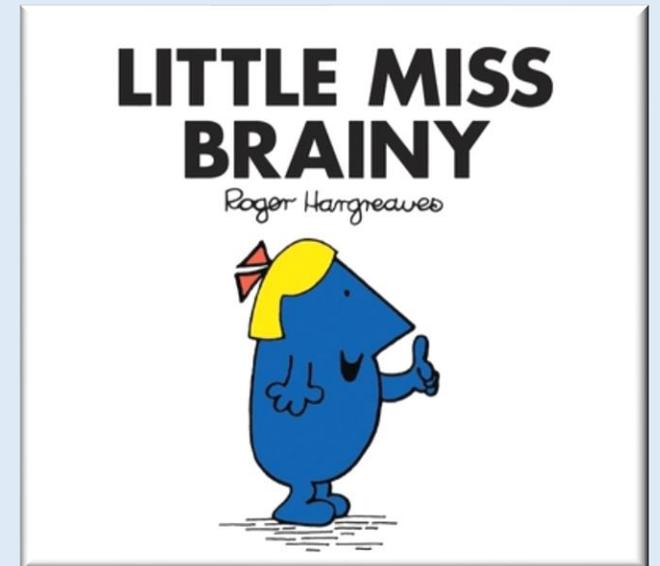
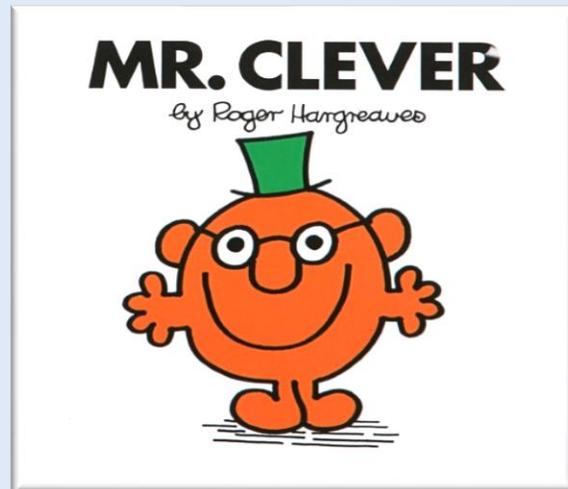
## THE THREE-BOX SOLUTION

By balancing the three boxes, managers can resolve the inherent tension of innovating a new business while running a high-performing business at the same time.



# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

## *Influential Conversations*



# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

## *Influential Conversations*

**As much process as content.....**

# Leaders and Leadership Schemas about L and T

## *Influential Conversations*

1. **Talk in the language of impact** Not just an idea...but a value proposition (e.g., value for student, operations, finance).....the juice has to be worth the squeeze
2. **Focus the message horizon** Problem solving, enhancement, opportunity, ...if we did nothing...so what?
3. **Bring voices to the table** Orchestrate the spectrum of opinion
4. **Manage salience** Communicate an appropriate sense of urgency or timing
5. **Anticipate risk** Demonstrate sound judgement and safe hands....'risks and challenges' have been considered. ..pose relatively safe experiments
6. **Balance continuity and change** Be careful of the language of 'disruption'
7. **Anticipate perspective** How might this make your life better and/or easier....empathic attunement.
8. **Constantly invite** What do you think? Tell me more? How can we ....?

# Movement Two

## The Executive Partnership



## Proposition:

It is our responsibility to empathically care for our executive leaders.

1. I agree. I'm a good person
2. I disagree. They have more responsibility to be caring for me
3. I disagree. Why should I, if they don't show much concern.
4. It's a smart idea and in both our interests.
5. It's a violation of the natural order of things.
6. None of the above. Stop talking c##p.

Moving beyond self serving narratives.



# Building a leadership partnership: *What is my >50%?*

Some propositions:

1. We need to get beyond our hierarchical schemas
2. We need to get beyond resentment and disappointment at one-way traffic
3. The most aware person has the most responsibility for making a partnership work.
4. There is 'me' and 'you'...but most importantly there is our 'working relationship' which is something else all together.

Do we eat our own dogfood?



Wisdom and Compassion  
Playing our biggest game.



# Executive Context

*What might we be sensitive to? How might we work with that in mind?*

## STAKES

**High Stakes** There are significant consequences of my decisions

**Grand Strategy** I feel the pressure to vision and innovate at scale

**Tough Gig** I am always on the job

## FACE

**Intellectual Credibility** I've got to be seen as the one who knows

**Imposter Syndrome** I'm a researcher in L and T clothing

## ATTENTION

**Cognitive Load** My span of control is crazy.....rationing my attention.

**Hidden Stress and Priorities** My pressures are different to yours....part of my job you don't see

**Role Press** Heat of executive accountability and managing upwards

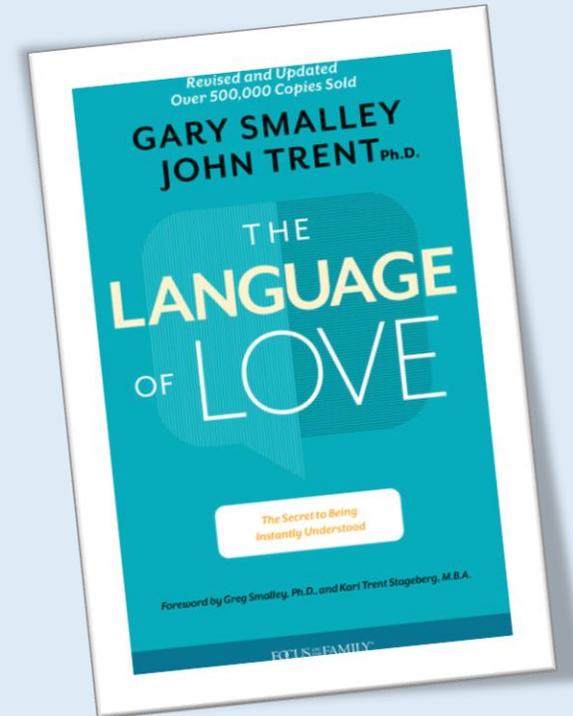
## AUTHORITY

**Power Drain** I don't have as much authority as you think...so don't expect me to drive things I can't. (Portfolio responsibility vs line authority)

**Other Voices** I have to balance competing agendas...in the exec and beyond

# When was the last time you built your 'executive relationship' and 'influence capital' through.....

- Appreciation?
- Affirmation?
- Understanding?



Ahhh...do I have to?



# Who are we as a leadership dyad? (EX 1)

*What are our synergies, mutual blind spots, and challenges?*

## Your Manager/Leader

- **Sensemaking** (Disciplinary culture, ways of knowing)
- **Journey to leadership** (experiences and perspectives, reality contact)
- **People** (attitude to staff, strengths or deficit focus)
- **Mindset** (strategic focus, attitude to risk)

## Yourself

- **Sensemaking** (Disciplinary culture, ways of knowing)
- **Journey to leadership** (experiences and perspectives, reality contact)
- **People** (attitude to staff, strengths or deficit focus)
- **Mindset** (strategic focus, attitude to risk)

Who are we as a leadership dyad? (EX 2)  
*What is our under-utilised 'joint leadership'  
potential?*

- **Strategic Mix:** How are we going to work together across the three innovation horizons?
- **Learning Agenda:** What do we agree we would like to understand better?
- **Impact:** What, for each of us, is our 'one thing'? How do we support each other to get there?

# Movement Three

## The Systems Partnership

Beyond the one-to-one relationship...when you speak...whose voice is being heard?



Timeless wisdom.....



A bad system will beat a good  
person every time.

*W. Edwards Deming —*

Leading in the middle layer of the system



The press of organisational levels....



# Leading from the Middle

*A shift in paradigm....from...*

## **Leading in the Middle (LiM)**

Level, Layer or Tier

Improving Performance

Better Systems

Coherence and Connection

Implementing Initiatives

*Hargraves et al. 2018*

# Leading from the Middle

## *A shift in paradigm.....to...*

### **Leading in the Middle (LiM)**

Level, Layer or Tier

Improving Performance

Better Systems

Coherence and Connection

Implementing Initiatives

### **Leading from the Middle (LfM)**

Center, Core and Heart

Transforming Learning & Well-being

Stronger Communities

Collective Responsibility

Taking Initiative

*Hargraves et al. 2018*

LfM: Creating shared meaning about the future and bringing this to bear in our present operations and priorities



# Leading from the Middle (LfM)

**Structures** The 'hub and spoke' conception is neither politically nor practically helpful. Given that innovation is a dynamic and organic process, and any formal 'hub and spokes' structure must be complemented by purposeful 'network processes' that provide ways, beyond just through the central hub, for university staff to connect with and learn from each other.

**Partnership and ecosystem** How might we position our element less as a bounded structure and more as a connected virtual partnership promoting collaboration within and across divisional boundaries?

**Edgeless Collaborator** How might we best realise the potential of our element less as a work unit and more as a member-facilitator of a dynamic network of hubs and nodes, communities of practice and solver communities aligned with a coherent vision?

# Leading from the Middle (LfM) *Theory to Action*

- **Identity** Define and convene/join-up your system
- **Manage Ourselves** Be the change you want to see
- **Joined-Up Mindset** Focusing on the whole-of-organisation
- **Marshal Diversity** through enlightened self-interest
- **Home Alone** Meet without the parents to enhance maturity
- **Network** Leadership is relational

So....in summary...'leading upwards'....

- Develop a shared language
- Be process focused
- Invest in the working relationship
- Lead from the middle
- **And, most critically.....**

If we wish to lead strategic conversations.....

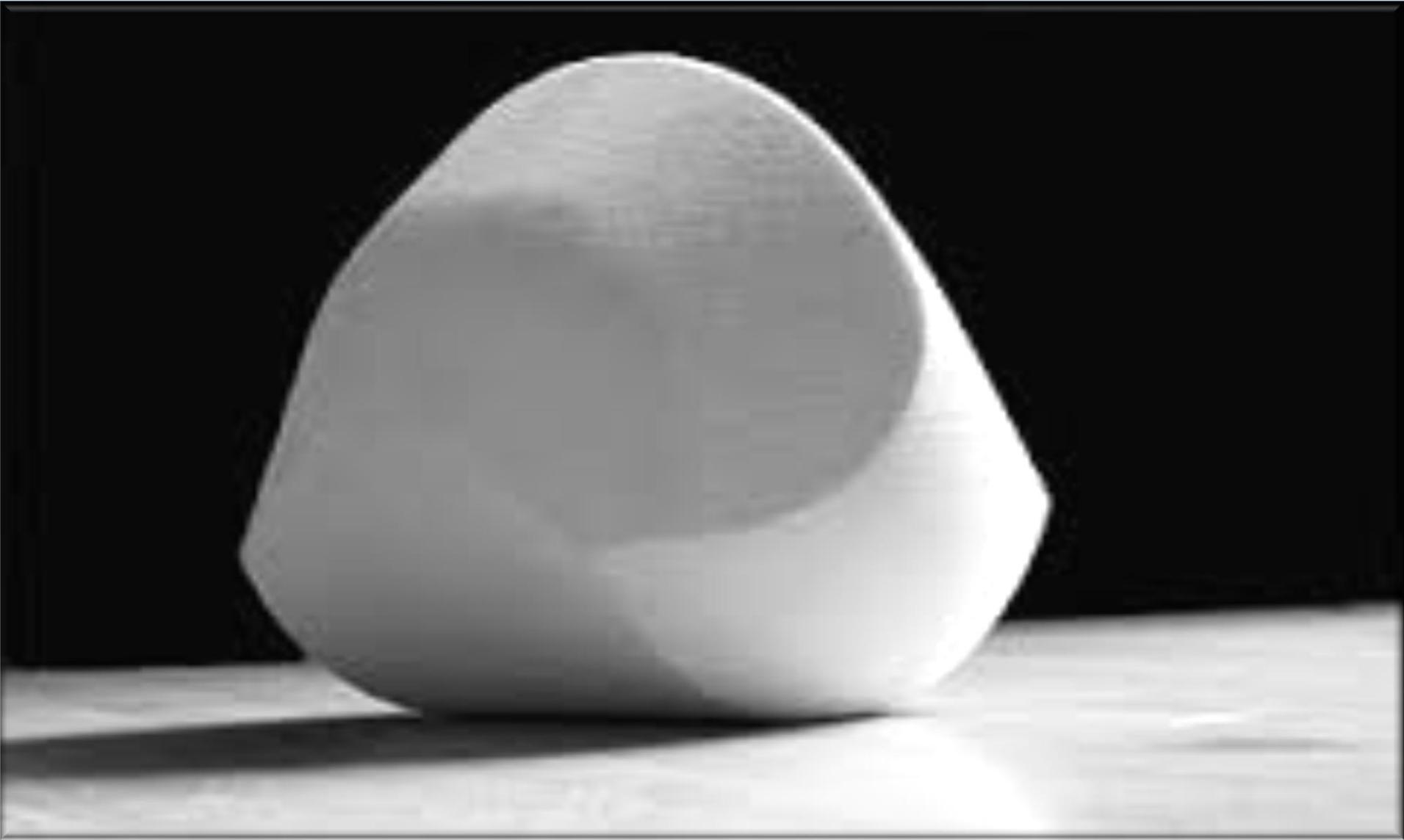


# Leadership as Stepping up

**The absolute necessity of standing for something**



# Gomboc



What is your 'one thing'?



What do you desperately want to achieve...even if it may not be possible?



Thank you

